

REPORT OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

As of Town Meeting on March 13th, Mary Anderson was no longer the Tax Collector, after 27 years in the position. This felt like a drastic change, as it did when Betty Stanley retired, as both of these women are landmarks in Fremont history. The Town's operations, and many of us who have volunteered and worked for the Town, are better for their assistance and guidance over many years, and we miss their contributions greatly. While Betty still is involved almost daily, Mary has become even more (if that is possible) involved with her position as Headmaster of Pinkerton Academy. Ruth Anderson retired as the Deputy Tax Collector late in 2007 as well. Ruthie is an inspiration to all who know her. I dearly miss Mary and Ruthie being around our office.

I look back at 2007 and see that once again, one of our most consuming projects was the April storms and severe, extensive flooding. Many residents were again displaced, with significant property damage. Those who were able to rebuild from the 2006 flood outside of the flood plain (by elevating), fared much better. Others continue to work on that process in hopes that future events will not be so devastating.

Once again the members of our Emergency Services and Highway Department were instrumental in protecting life and property during the more than week long storm and flooding event. This flood brought with it a complete disruption of telephone service to Fremont and several surrounding communities, with the flooding and complete breakdown of the Verizon phone data center in Raymond. With this added challenge, there were more well-being checks, and almost constant coverage at the Safety Complex. Our volunteers and employees are to be commended for their vigilance and dedication.

Matthew Thomas completed 29 years as Supervisor of Checklist when he resigned in January of 2007; another notable service tenure in Fremont. Near the same time, Sandra Roy resigned as an inspector of elections after many years in that position.

We spent a lot of time this year working with the Cable Access Contract Renewal Committee, moving ahead toward a cable renewal contract that would take us the next 10 years. The Committee focused on public access, which even before the contract was finalized, had come a long way. Volunteer Keith Stanton taped many a meeting for rebroadcast on Comcast cable channel 22, broadening the involvement of the community in meetings such as Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee, and School Board. Late in the year, we were also able to establish guidelines and have Comcast begin a community bulletin board which scrolls messages on channel 22 when a taped meeting or program is not being rebroadcast. Forms for use of the cable channel are available in the Selectmen's Office and on the town website, along with the current policies for their use. We expect that once a contract is completed and signed, that a further Cable Access-type Committee will be appointed, and additional programming outlined and offered. One of the goals for the future is live broadcasting of meetings. Our website is kept up to date, and information will be posted there as soon as it becomes available.

The Veteran's Open House in November was again well attended, and a fitting tribute to our men and women in the Armed Services, current, past, and future. This, along with our annual Memorial Day observance continue to be important tributes to our many men and women in the Armed Services.

In late October, Police Lieutenant Charles Rand announced his resignation from the Fremont Police Department after 10 years as a full-time officer, Fremont's first, which was initially funded with a federal COPS grant. Charles has been with the department for more than 15 years. In my early years in Fremont as the town's first ever full-time employee, I was comforted when Charles was also upgraded to that status, as we worked through many growth issues in town together. Charles is pursuing career interests in the private sector and he is wished every success and happiness. He is currently still on the Department roster as a part-time officer.

Nearing year end, Barbara Baker retired as a Supervisor of the Checklist with 30 years of service in that position. She began as a Supervisor by appointment in 1977 filling a vacated term, and has remained there ever since! Vast changes took place this past year in the election net voter system, now a web-based program at the State level. Barbara also decided to retire from her position as a Library Trustee, and graciously agreed to stay on until it was election time. Barb has dedicated much time to the Town of Fremont, and her day to day involvement is dearly missed.

Other board and committee members who resigned this year include Kevin Zukas from the Budget Committee, Dan Daley as a Planning Board Alternate. Angelo Amengual did not seek reappointment for another term on the Parks & Recreation Commission. Bob Wines did not seek reappointment on the Zoning Board of Adjustment after many years of service to that Board.

The Fire Rescue Department worked further on their combination, with all members now belonging to a unified force. This has taken time and patience and energy on behalf of the members and the leadership. We will miss the contributions of several members, including Deputy Chief Lisa Maffei and Captain Chris Braid, who resigned late in the year to pursue other avenues. As you can see from the Fire Rescue Department in this report, additional volunteer help is always needed. Fire and EMS service is one of the most rewarding things you will ever do, but it requires time and dedication, and a tremendous commitment to training and emergency calls. If you think this is something that interests you, I would urge you to speak with someone on the Fire Rescue Department, or to attend one of their meetings, the first non-holiday Monday of each month at the Safety Complex.

Annmarie Scribner was elected as Tax Collector in March at Mary's retirement, and she has spent a busy year learning the ropes. Kathy Arsenault took over Budget Committee clerical duties from Jeanne Nygren and has also spent a learning "budget season" in this position. Jeanne continues to keep up with an increasing volume of tasks in the Selectmen's Office and has this past year also broadened the scope of her work here.

Brande McLean, who had been designated as the Chair of the Cable Committee, took quite ill late in the year, and had to discontinue her work with that Committee; as well as her attendance at meetings related to her position as one of Fremont's Representatives to the Rockingham Planning Commission. Brande had also been the founder and first President of the Fremont Garden Club. We wish her well.

We were all saddened by the sudden death of our Planning Board Chairman Larry Stilwell in December. The Planning Board misses his skills and many contributions. The stories of how Larry organized and ran his meetings continue to be told. The history of his "gavel" will live on in Fremont lore!

While growth in Fremont has slowed, we continue to see and service many residents daily at the Town Hall in the various offices. The Clerk's Office has begun doing many transactions through the mail, which is always convenient. Assessing records and a greater depth of town information are available on the world wide web, which seems to be the trend. These resources are available through the Town's web site at www.Fremont.nh.gov.

We continue to look for interested volunteers to serve on various boards, committees, and commissions. The local volunteer is an ever-precious commodity, and one that helps to keep costs down, and preserve the small-town character that Fremont is known and loved for. More meetings are being broadcast on the cable channel, virtually all minutes are available on our website, and meetings are posted in a variety of town buildings and on the web. Consider getting involved in one of the many organizations that serve the community. We also continue to produce a monthly newsletter to reach people without internet or cable, and hope it serves as a reminder of the important things happening in the community.

We do like to get feedback about what you might be looking for. We are getting more forms and information to the website, and are also getting more information to the Comcast channel, in an effort to reach additional members of the community. We have no way to gauge how many folks have internet or cable access, but do hope that those of you who do, get some value from the additional resources and information.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson
Town Administrator

"Learn as if you were going to live forever. Live as if you were going to die tomorrow."

~ Anonymous